

THE INFLUENCE OF THE PRESENT POLITICAL AND SECURITY CONSTRAINTS IN EASTERN EUROPE OVER THE ROMANIAN TOURISM

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Abstract: This paper is focused on analysis of the current political situation in Eastern Europe, having as main objective to identify the political and security constraints on tourism, making a study case on their impact on Romanian tourism.

The research methodology involved activities of collection, processing and interpretation of information on the issue of the political situation in the above mentioned area, both at national and international level, using a large documentary material (books, studies, magazines, legislative regulations, database information available through Internet etc.), making analytical and objective observations, theoretical analysis and content analysis.

The results of the research provide analytical informations on the political situation in Eastern Europe, and their potential influence on Romanian tourism. The research identifies and highlights the entire complex of relations among countries and institutions which have as effect changes in the sphere of tourism industry.

The papers conclusions contribute to the identification of the current political and security constraints able to cause effects on the Romanian tourism, in order to contribute to the opening of a new research topic on the design of public strategies to counteract these effects.

Keywords: tourism, political situation, political constraints, security constraints, government

Introduction

Tourism is a complex phenomenon, which may constitute an important source of development and recovery of the national economies of countries, that have resources and exploits them properly. Tourism is viewed as an increasingly important component of the national economy, as a factor of economic and social growth, as an integral part of the economic unitary assembly, that requires the intervention of the state in its development, and at the same time ensuring and referencing at a macroeconomic level in relation to the evolution of all other component (Foris D.,) nationwide and internationally branches, in relation to regional political context. It is only governments which have the power to provide the political stability, security ... which tourism requires (Elliott, 2002).

Analysis regarding the political situation and the security in Eastern Europe

There are many security definitions, and they are carried out by people in the field of science who have connections in the area of international relations, since the phrase "international" is a good development of the term "externally", which represent most of the threats to an entity, and this, along with the internal ones, represent their totality.

In our context, states are the the main subject, so we can not consider that there are organizations outside the states, even though some of them, with their economic force, could effectively determine the political and economic operations of some states.

If we analyze the situation from the historical point of view, we note, that in time, the issue of security has evolved from the simple awareness to a difficult climate in which they

operate, to the identification of almost of all the exhaustive vulnerabilities, as well as the establishment of various types of threats.

Thus, it was passed from the military level-meaning troops preparedness and a massive arming, to the identification of the political and economic strategies of states; starting from this point there are achieved a special diversity of predictions that cover all spheres of action: from the premiere of a drama, with message able to raise people against their own government, to the count and analysis of the most unimportant line from a text written on a blog of a person with a certain influence.

The 21st century, that now we are all living it, has brought a consummate instrument, which managed to do what dozens of administrative methods didn't realize: leveling the planet.

The instrument itself is called internet, and we must note that until it, the differences between countries were very large, since the access to the technological information - that is in fact the essence of discrepancies between states - was prohibitive or almost impossible for many countries.

So, we can now observe that - for states differentiation – it counts not so much the quantity of resources, but the acces to a low-priced technology and the desire to develop enterprises able to highlight it.

However, leveling is based on something important, which can give cold shivers both governments and citizens: electricity.

Specifically, the internet cannot operate without electricity, which can make very easy for any mission of a political group (governing or in opposition, or in type of diversionary assault) to destroy a country or to produce panic and important damage: the destruction of power plants or various tension points, leading to disruption of hours or of days of electricity supply. Failing this, the computers will stop, the batteries may not operate too long and renewable sources will not be able to cope. Thus, the social chaos is installed.

We should observe that any industry would be affected in terms of lack of electricity, and the tourism industry based on high consumption of energy would be among the first affected.

As a first conclusion, this issue is of great importance, and that governments will be more obliged to first watch cyber security, and at the same time, in terms of supplying the electricity.

All these aspects are very well known in the general staff of the armies of each country, as well as in all offices that relate to the safety or security of the state and citizens. Of these considerations citizens are also focused on, and in different measures, however, this fact do not make the issue less important.

Howsoever analysis, electricity will be the first issue to governments - economically - for future years.

Analyzing the energetical situation of the countries of the world, we can not be entirely satisfied, because the quantities of energy are, as in each economic system from where you receive, but you do not put back in place with the same speed with the one you take, they become shorter in relation to the growing population of the planet.

The demographic increase of the world countries, which has now reached over 7,23 billion people¹, leaves no room for doubt: the desire of every man's comfort, perfectly legitimate, requires each state to find any method to ensure this comfort, either, or only for the reason of ensuring their powers for those found in government positions.

The demographic increase puts a certain pressure, in terms of comfort, on energy resources mainly - a simple walk through cities, and careful observation of the percentage of people who listen to music on headphones or using a tablet or other technological tool, that allows an easier access to any form of entertainment, oblige states to fight with each other for any form of exploitation and transport of energy.

No less important is the price you get access to energy. Among Romania's neighbors, is a state with a pretty good image of itself, but reality contradicts: Bulgaria.

Specifically, the economy has its inflexible laws, and governments, no matter how much protection they want to offer their citizens, they have no choice than to raise the prices.

However, this measure has been applied, and in Bulgaria also, and the result was amazing: not the size of the protests, however, surprising as proportion, for a "success" EU member country - but especially the fact that there is also a case of self-immolation.

Thus, Bulgaria, a European country, with a quasi-majority of white population, and direct access to the mainland market is the most balanced in terms of economic development, has shown that it can not resist to a flare of price hike in the energy area, which immediately proved the limits of the possibility of action of a government in the internal space: either provide what would today is considered to be necessary at a bearable price, or it should leave.

It is true, that the law there was so far, only now it has a peculiarity: there are no exceptions to its application. If until now states could have a reprieve from the electorate, *modus vivendi*, now the government have no longer daily choices: either it ensures the needs of the people, or falls in the election (by mass protests in major cities).

This idea arises from an upsetting cause: comfort is the ultimate expression in the form of the social status, and the one, which does not have it, is more exposed to the public contempt, like a person who was unable to pay honor duties in the 19th century.

In this context, the increase of insecurity appears from the prices that the states sell their energy resources. This operation has unfortunately rather a political than economic character, which doesn't help the state/states that uses/use its prices policy as a political weapon, because they cause vulnerabilities in an imagologic way, always being considered only as users of resources in the form of blackmail ... carrot and stick.

It is true that the owner of the raw material can sell it at what price it wants, however it is not profitable to be considered always to be the one who sell only with a political purpose. In this context, it becomes vulnerable because no one will trust it, being aware that any price differences actually means that behind the scenes there has been either an agreement between the seller and the buyer, or disputes between the two states are large or even irreconcilable.

In this context, Russia's policy for example in the matter of exportation of raw materials. Russia receives more hits than any other state because of its exchange policy of raw material, which does not help it, nor on the relations with the U.S.A, EU, China, and even less in former Soviet territory.

¹ <http://www.worldometers.info/ro>, seen to may 4, 2014.

In fact, especially in this latest geopolitical area Russia loses points because of the high prices, but at the same time, maintaining a low price for the former soviet countries, but do not help them in upgrading their economies, which leads on medium and long term to a reduction of industrial competitiveness, as well as to loss of export contracts. Keeping them in the soviet sphere of influence, the current CSI.

Incidentally, this aspect is revealed and in the dynamic of the foreign investment in the former Soviet Union countries, the best example in the case of Ukraine - the former "most developed economy after the Russian SFR."

According to the Institute of statistics of the Ukraine², picked up by the presse³, EU member countries investments in Ukraine have increased from about 50% in 2000, from about 75% in 2012, and the investments of the Russian Federation (official name of Russia today) have dropped from about 10% to 7%. What reveals a certain dynamic industrial, type: do you want to export to our market, allow us to export and invest in yours (because your work force is cheaper).

Whether it wants or not, each former soviet state will have to make those tough reforms, even though it will result an increased unemployment, social unrest, perhaps even violent upheavals of governments, and will have major negative effects in the area, because of the fact that, the vulnerable states allow greater transfer of everything, that means crime towards the borders of states that have a political-economic situation more stable.

These data were valid in the context of peace, but the events that began at the end of 2013 have destabilized not only militarily and administratively the entire area, but also the economic aspects.

As everyone can see, today's troops are on the streets of many cities, the Crimean peninsula is under Russian control, but with massive economic problems (reduction of water supply at a level of over 80%) - which greatly reduces the potential tourist value recognized. All these events have brought the collapse of tourism figures in the area, because this industry of loisir does not fully operates in time of peace, in which investors know that having only one threat, linked to a possible non-payment of taxes.

In this context, we need to understand that it is the only one law in force in the economy of the 21st century: a high industrialization is the only possibility of firms to survive, and any arrearage is punishable to a quick bankruptcy.

Industrialization is not only with the newest products for various economic activities, but also integrating them throughout the commercial stream, in order to increase the comfort and well-being of the population.

Which are in fact the two lines of action?

Firstly, the technological unification, for which the internet is responsible, because it provides to each customer the opportunity to a correct information about products from the market, which can make a deal grow within a few months for several times, mainly to this rapid propaganda brought by this network.

² <http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/>, seen to may 4 2014.

³ <http://gazeta.zn.ua/international/ukraina-es-problemy-integracii-.html>

In this way, you have no choice: at any time, a better technological product can eliminate you from the market. So, either you invest in the newest and more efficient technology, or you vanish.

A second direction of action is represented by the fact that the unification process is accompanied by the elimination of many economic and trade barriers-indeed, especially the customs, which helps the carriage of goods and of persons. In this context, the states has only a few methods to protect its domestic market for its own products, making appear a truly global monopolies, in front of which is almost impossible to work.

Either, it has entered in a circle without hope: you need to produce and invest in new technology, because you are in relation to an economic actor that can act at an international/regional/global level, or you will be absorbed by other actors from stronger markets.

Today you are compelled to stay in touch with everything that is newer, in order to design an image for a competent economy, that brings more money than those who don't care the flow of time.

In this context, we note that it is easy to build economic empires in different areas, but this actually translates into major vulnerabilities and to jobs volatility, which, in conjunction with the same trait of capital makes the increase of long-term projects to be more difficult to continue.

In fact, this problem is observed in many spheres of social activity, in which long-term contracts are abandoned in the face of price oscillations. Incidentally, one of the reproach that Russia and Gazprom makes to different partners is that they no longer want to conclude such contracts, preferring the short-term contracts, which are in reality the expression of this commercial volatility.

All of these are not able to pacify anyone, job security has become the lowest in the history of mankind, so that the projections of future, careers and life in general are now becoming more complicated in most states. In conclusion, the feeling of psychological and economic security declines, what will result, unfortunately, not toward a positive direction regarding humanity.

Unfortunately, the quality of politicians seems to have fallen in each country, every year, a close look to their actions proves the lack of positive results, which are somehow packed in words, and expressed on television. The consequence? They are not able to resolve the current situation, and the situation of other serious events obviously they will not know what to do - they will crumble or use most inadecvatate means, in relation to time.

However, all these lead us to one conclusion: political stability and security in the 21st century, at the top level of social structures, become insecure, because it seems to be inevitable to burst up social outbreaks in states. The few uncontaminated oasis from these negative events - if the uncontamination was made in an elegant and dignified manner - will become centres of migration, which in time, will be subject to the same pressures.

The influence of the political and security constraints on the Romanian tourism

The development of tourism is influenced by many factors, different as nature and role, that may cause the increase or the decrease of the activity. Knowing the factors and the

identification of situations that determine and promote tourism, or on the contrary, they have relative braking effects, it has a particular relevance for the development of this field.

Below, we will look at the possible political and security constraints that can be generated by the current political situation and also, can generate an influence and an impact on tourism, from the point of view of the issues that may cause or facilitate tourism braking.

Regarding tourism, the internet is not just a source of information, is a tool for management, marketing, storage, analysis, reporting, financial transactions; it is an important vector of organisations development, of products and transactions, of innovation and progress. The internet evolution generates as a result a new tourism economy, involving the development of e-tourism in an increasing exponentially proportion. In the same account, Longhi (2008), in his paper *Usage of the internet and e-Tourism. Towards a new economy of tourism*, raises and answers at the question “How does internet change the travel and tourism activities? These changes have rightly been assimilated to an "Industrial Revolution". They do not regard the improvement or the extension of established things than the emergence of the new. So in airlines and transportation services, it is not the emergence of perfect market, but the one of the low costs — major organizational innovation for which the internet has been a necessary condition – which is the basic consequence of the revolution”.

Also in Romania, the internet has become vital for tourism industry. Tourism information become easily accessible and at a low price, the speed of circulation of information, the possibility of creating, promoting and marketing the service packages, and also the package components adjusted to market prices and related to a competitive level (with minimum human and financial resources); they address to consumer masses in a short time, and are likely to broaden the tourist market and to open up new one, and to ensure the development of tourism industry.

Reported to the field of tourism, not using the internet represents a compulsion for the progress and development of the tourism activity. In this regard, several years ago, we found requirements and criteria related to the use of the internet of legal regulations in Romania, on the subject of classification of tourism accommodation structures and food; and of licensing travel agencies: the possession of an e-mail address and a website, both for the tourism and travel agency (Foris, d., 2011), the value of services and cashing by electronic means of payment, the classification of hotels in upper categories, the existence of internet connection or of wireless system in the room, and also an area with computer and internet access connections (Order No. 65/2013).

In relation to the aspects concerning the use of the internet, cyber safety may represent a constraint for Romanian tourism, reported at the level of classifying the information and also for the safety of the financial transactions and informatics frauds. For that purpose Bidart, R., Silveira, L.M., Pereira, A.C.M, Veloso, A.A., (2013) in the paper *Risk analysis of electronic transactions in tourism web applications* remark “...a worldwide increase of online sales. However, fraud has also been increased on the same rate or more. On the tourism e-market it is not different, thus millions of frauds occur each year”.

Another constraint for tourism can be electricity, an important resource for all sectors of activity, as well as the price of access for this type of service. Electricity is vital to the operation of all activities from tourism industry, which is why, the interruption or the discontinuity of electricity supply is one of the most avoided constraints.

Concerning this aspect, in Romania, legal regulations of hotels classification and operation of categories of classification over 3 stars, must assure generating set or two alternative sources of electricity supply.

Another important aspect is the access price to the electricity supplied by the national system, which has an influence on the competitiveness of the Romanian tourism in comparison with the international tourism.

The energy resources and the selling price of these can generate an increasing insecurity among tourism domain, thus, addressing for the supply of natural gas, may give the rise of constraints for tourism accommodation structures, production costs, reflected in products and services with uncompetitive prices on international tourism market. We notice the fact that the Romanian Government's Green House⁴ Programme, accessible to natural and legal persons, for the heating installation systems using renewable energy, is also affordable for tourism companies, particularly to small and middle accommodation establishments. The performance and the economic viability of these systems has been demonstrated by Dalton, G.J., Lockington, D.A., Baldock, T.E., (2009) in the *Case study feasibility analysis supply option for the small to medium-sized tourist accommodation*.

Natural resources can generate constraint upon tourism, the most important being the failure of providing water supply (drinking and waste water). Concerning to this topic for Romania we shall approach the mineral and thermal waters subject, in reference to balneary tourism, which also represents a constraint from the point of view of the exploitation deficits of this type of resource by state institutions, and also a scattering of natural riches (multiple unexploited natural resources), which constitutes a genuine brake on tourism development, for generating an add-on and new jobs in tourism and also in related fields.

The lack of quality and professionalism of human resource for tourism represents a constraint due to the fact that tourism services are provided by the employed staff. The human resource is the most important factor for providing quality tourism services. In Romania, for the purpose of attestation such constraints, there are legal rules that establishes the obligation that all tourism activities must use qualified labour and expertise force.

The industrialization is for the Romanian tourism industry, the only way of survival in the fierce market competition, both globally and at a national and local level. Therefore, it can act as a constraint because modern technologies bring changes and improvements in a rapid way, and secondly, due to the costs of new technologies, although, in Romania, in the last years, the income from tourism activities have decreased, while the number of tourists has increased⁵. The decrease in profits is determined, on the one hand by the reduction of tariffs, and on the other side by the adjustment of tourism package. In order to improve the technology in Romanian hotels, we identify requirements asked by legal norms, such as, the use of taxed management systems, of equipments and air-conditioning systems etc., so that can be classified in higher categories.

The technology unification is accompanied by the elimination of many economic, trade barriers and customs procedures of goods carriage and the free movement of persons. Starting from this year, citizens of the Republic of Moldova can travel without a visa within

⁴ http://www.afm.ro/casa_verde_pj.php, seen to may 5 2014.

⁵ Adapted of Romanian Tourism Statistical Abstract (2013), National Institute of Statistics, Bucharest

the E.U.⁶ states, implying the fact that the holders of a moldovian biometric passport can enter Romania and remain in the territory of the country without the obligation to hold a visa, for stays that do not exceed 90 days.

The worsening of the conflict situation that began at the end of 2013 on the territory of Ukraine, can become a political and security constraint for Romania, which can lead to disparages to national level of tourism industry, where, at the level of perception of foreign tourists, Romania will be considered an unsafe tourist destination. This situation may lead to a significant decrease in the number of foreign tourists and revenues of Romania relating to international tourism.

Under the political and administrative aspect, the Romanian tourism industry requires government involvement to ensure political stability, security and also legal and tax regulations for tourism, as well as main factor to develop and to implement public policies to prevent and counteract the effects of all factors that may generate constraints upon tourism. Public strategies are also in Romania, as in other states, in charge of government institutions at the central level, and of the local public administration on a local level, institutions that are generally led by politicians, who, in most cases, do not have the necessary professional skills in the areas they coordinate, and unfortunately tourism is not an exception in this aspect, which leads to generation of political constraints on the development of tourism.

Conclusions

An analysis of the political and security situation in Eastern Europe does not offer many favourable perspectives, because of the position of the Ukrainian State is not likely to help the fears of any economic operator.

The fact that borders are changed does not mean that it will appear issues that are related only to the establishment of property rights in new conditions, or the establishment of tax bodies and tax legislation, which will make any investor to be reluctant to develop projects-even more so in the tourism industry.

In addition, the possibility of the outbreak of a war that makes the country's rating in the area to decline, and from here, there will be no winners, no matter how would like a state to substantiate their own policies on tourism.

In this context, we analyzed the possible political and security constraints that can be generated by the current political situation and can generate the influence and the impact on tourism, from the point of view of the issues that may cause or facilitate tourism braking, which allowed us to draw some conclusions.

Industrialization can act as a constraint for tourism in the absence of innovation. Internet evolution generates as a result a new tourism economy, involving the development of e-tourism in an increasing exponentially proportion, but cyber safety may represent a constraint for travel, reported to the level of information privacy and the safety of financial transactions and informatics fraud.

Interrupting or the lack of electricity supply is one of the most avoidable constraints on tourism. Energy resources and their selling price can generate insecurity including in

⁶ Regulation (EU) No 259/2014 of The European Parliament and of The Council of 3 April 2014

tourism growth. Natural resources can generate constraint on tourism, the most important of these is the failure and the lack of water. Also, the lack of quality and professionalism of human resource in tourism represent a constraint to tourism development. The fact that, those who have to decide, are not professional can lead to political constraints of tourism development.

The current political situation in the Eastern Europe can become a political and security constraint for Romanian tourism.

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